

Statesboro Youth Council Engagement (Placemaking Project)

In May 2024, the Statesboro Youth Council illustrated impactful community engagement through their new Chess Park project. After determining key areas along the Willie McTell Trail in Downtown Statesboro that would benefit from some improvement, the council applied for a Placemaking grant through Georgia City Solutions.

After successfully winning the \$500 grant, the council proposed creating a life-size chess park, located across from the Downtown Dog Park. This project was further supported by match donations from Grice Connect, Rotary Club of Downtown Statesboro, and the City of Statesboro. The Statesboro-Bulloch County Library also partnered with the youth council on the park and plans to rent chess pieces to use at the park's table.

The construction of Chess Park required true community collaboration between youth council members and the Statesboro Public Works Department. They worked alongside one another to install the chess board and flower planters, as well as to replace benches along the trail. This new park marks the first step towards planned improvements the youth council plans to implement along the McTell Trail.

At the opening ceremony in 2025, the youth council's Junior Mayor Jamersyn Hughes highlighted the significance of this project discussing how Placemaker projects have become more than just a beautiful park and has become part of their community they are building together." He also emphasized that the new park would help the community foster connections, preserve memory, and shape identity.